

# The Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

The Well-Known Novelist and the Creator of the "Craig Kennedy" Stories

Presented in Collaboration With the Pathe Players and the Eclectic Film Company

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## SYNOPSIS.

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders and other crimes. The principal clue to the criminal is the warning letter which is sent the victims, signed with a "clutching hand." The latest victim of the mysterious assassin is Taylor Dodge, the insurance president. His daughter, Elaine, employs Craig Kennedy, the famous scientific detective, to try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy accomplishes is told by his friend, Jameson, a newspaper man. After many fruitless attempts to find Elaine, Kennedy finds her at last in the Clutching Hand is at last found to be none other than Perry Bennett, Elaine's lawyer and the man she is engaged to marry. Bennett flies to the den of one of his Chinese criminals, the Chinaman forerunner of Bennett the secret of the whereabouts of \$10,000. Then he gives the lawyer a position which will suspend animation for months. Kennedy reaches Bennett's side just after he has lost consciousness.

## TWENTY-FIFTH EPISODE

### THE LOST TORPEDO.

From the rocks of a promontory that jutted out not far from the wharf where Wu Fang's body was found and Kennedy had disappeared, opened up a beautiful panorama of a bay on one side and the sound on the other.

It was a deserted bit of coast. But anyone who had been standing near the promontory the next day might have seen a thin line, as if the water, sparkling in the sunlight, had been cut by a huge knife. Gradually a thin steel rod seemed to rise from the water itself, still moving ahead, though slowly now as it pushed its way above the surface. After it came a round cylinder of steel, studded with bolts. It was the hatch of a submarine, and the rod was the periscope.

As the submarine lay there at rest, the waves almost breaking over it, the hatch slowly opened and a hand appeared groping for a hold. Then appeared a face with a tangle of curly black hair and keen, fearful eyes. After it the body of a man rose out of the hatch, a tall, slender, striking person. He reached down into the hold of the boat and drew forth a life preserver.

"All right," he called down in an accent slightly foreign, as he buckled on the belt. "I shall communicate with you as soon as I have something to report."

Then he deliberately plunged overboard and struck out for the shore. Hand over hand, he churned his way through the water toward the beach until at last his feet touched bottom, and he waded out, shaking the water from himself like a huge animal.

The coming of the stranger had not been entirely unheralded. Along the shore road by which Kennedy and I had followed the crooks who we thought had the torpedo, on that last chase, was waiting now a powerful limousine with its motor purring. A chauffeur was sitting at the wheel and inside, at the door, sat a man peering out along the road to the beach. Suddenly the man in the machine signaled to the driver.

"He comes!" he cried eagerly. "Drive down the road, closer, and meet him."

As the swimmer strode shivering up the roadway the car approached him. The assistant swung open the door and ran forward with a thick, warm coat and hat.

Neither the master nor the servant spoke as they met, but the man wrapped the coat about him, hurried into the car, the driver turned and quickly they sped toward the city.

Secretly though the entrance of the stranger had been planned, however, it was not unobserved.

Along the beach, on a boulder, gazing thoughtfully out to sea and smoking an old briar pipe, sat a bent fisherman clad in an oldskin hat and heavy, ugly boots. About his neck was a long woolen muffler which concealed the lower part of his face quite as effectively as his scraggly, grizzled whiskers.

Suddenly he seemed to discover something that interested him, slowly rose, then turned and almost ran up the shore. Quickly he dropped behind a large rock and waited, peering out.

As the limousine, bearing the stranger, on whom the fisherman had kept his eyes riveted, turned and drove away, the old salt rose from behind his rock, gazed after the car as if to fix every line of it in his memory, and then he, too, quickly disappeared up the road.

The stranger's car had scarcely disappeared far down the bend of the road when the fisherman reappeared. In an almost incredible time he had changed his oldskin and muffler for a dark coat and silk hat. He was no longer a fisherman, but a rather fussy looking old gentleman, bewhiskered still, with eyes looking out keenly from a pair of gold-rimmed glasses.

"Follow that car—at any cost," he ordered simply as he let himself into

the little motor, and the driver shot ahead down a bit of side road and out into the main shore road again, urging the car forward to overtake the one ahead.

Such was the entrance of the stranger—Marcus Del Mar—into America. How I managed to pass the time during the first few days after the strange disappearance of Kennedy I don't know. It was all like a dream—the apartment empty, the laboratory empty, my own work on the Star uninteresting, Elaine brokenhearted, life itself a burden.

Hoping against hope, the next day I decided to drop around at the Dodge house. As I entered the library unannounced I saw that Elaine, with a faith for which I envied her, was sitting at a table, her back toward the door. She was gazing sadly at a photograph. Though I could not see it, I needed not to be told whose it was. She did not hear me come in, so engrossed was she in her thoughts. Nor did she notice me at first as I stood just behind her. Finally I put my hand on her shoulder as if I had been an elder brother.

She looked up into my face. "Have you heard from him yet?" she asked anxiously.

I could only shake my head sadly. She sighed. Involuntarily she rose and together we moved toward the garden, the last place we had seen him about the house.

We had been pacing up and down the garden, talking earnestly, only a short time when a man made his way in from the Fifth avenue gate.

"Is this Miss Dodge?" he asked.

Neither Elaine nor I knew him at the time, though I think she thought he might be the bearer of some message from Craig. As a matter of fact, he was the emissary to whom the stenographer had thrown the torpedo model from the Navy building in Washington.

His visit was only a part of a deep-laid scheme. Only a few minutes before three crooks—among them our visitor—had stopped just below the house on a side street. To him the others had given final instructions and a note, and he had gone on, leaving the two standing there.

"I have a note for you," he said, bowing and handing an envelope to Elaine, which she tore open and read.

Washington, D. C.

Miss Elaine Dodge,  
Fifth avenue, New York.  
My Dear Miss Dodge:—The bearer, Mr. Bailey of the Secret Service, would like to question you regarding the disappearance of Mr. Kennedy and the model of his torpedo.

Morgan Bertrand,  
United States Secret Service.

Even as we were talking, the other two crooks had already moved up and had made their way around back of the stone wall that cut off the Dodge garden back of the house. There they stood, whispering eagerly and gazing furtively over the wall as their man talked to Elaine.

After a moment I stepped aside, while Elaine read the note, and as he asked her a few questions I could not help feeling that the affair had a very suspicious look. The more I thought of it, the less I liked it. Finally I could stand it no longer.

"I beg your pardon," I excused myself to the alleged Mr. Bailey. "but may I speak to Miss Dodge alone just a minute?"

He bowed rather ungracefully. I thought, and Elaine followed me aside while I told her my fears.

"I don't like the looks of it myself," she agreed. "Yes, I'll be very careful what I say."

While we were talking I could see out of the corner of my eye that the fellow was looking at us askance and frowning. But if I had had an X-ray eye I might have seen his two companions on the other side of the wall, peering over as they had done before and showing every evidence of annoyance at my interference.

The man resumed his questioning of Elaine regarding the torpedo, and she replied guardedly, as, in fact, she could not do otherwise.

Suddenly we heard shouts on the other side of the wall, as though someone were attacking someone else.

There seemed to be several of them, for a man quickly flung himself over the wall and ran to us.

"They're after us," he shouted to Bailey.

Instantly our visitor drew a gun and followed the newcomer as he ran to get out of the garden in the opposite direction.

Just then a tall, well-dressed, striking man came over the wall, accompanied by another dressed as a policeman, and rushed toward us.

The car bearing the mysterious stranger, Del Mar, kept on until it reached New York, then made its way through the city until it came to the Hotel La Coste.

Del Mar jumped out of the car, his wet clothes covered completely by the long coat. He registered and rode up the elevator to rooms which had already been engaged for him, in his

suite a valet was already unpacking some trunks and laying out clothes when Del Mar and his assistant entered.

With an exclamation of satisfaction at his unostentatious entry into the city, Del Mar threw off his heavy coat. The valet hastened to assist him in removing the clothes, still wet and wrinkled from his plunge into the sea. Scarcely had Del Mar changed his clothes than he received two visitors. Strangely enough, they were dressed in the uniform of policeman.

"First of all we must convince them of our honesty," he said, looking fixedly at the two men. "Orders have been given to the men employed by Wu Fang to be about in half an hour. We must pretend to arrest them on sight. You understand?"

"Yes, sir," she nodded.

"Very well, come on," Del Mar ordered, taking up his hat and preceding them from the room.

Outside the La Coste, Del Mar and his two policemen entered the car which had driven Del Mar from the seacoast and were quickly whisked away, uptown, until they came near the Dodge house.

Del Mar leaped from the car, followed by his two policemen. "There they are, already," he whispered, pointing up the avenue.

All three hastened up the avenue now, where, beside a wall, they could see two men looking through intently as though very angry at something going on inside.

"Arrest them!" shouted Del Mar, as his own men ran forward.

The fight was short and sharp, with every evidence of being genuine. One of the men managed to break away and jump the garden wall, with Del Mar and one of the policemen after him, while the other only reached the wall to be dragged down by the other policeman.

Elaine and I had been, as I have said, talking with the man named Bailey, who posed as a secret service man, when the rumpus began. As the man came over the fence, warning Bailey, it was evident that neither of them had time to escape. With his club the policeman struck the newcomer of the two flat, while the tall, athletic gentleman leaped upon Bailey, and before we knew it had him disarmed. In a most clean-cut and professional way he snapped the bracelets on the man.

Elaine was astonished at the kaleidoscopic turn of affairs, too astonished even to make an outcry. As for me, it was all so sudden that I had no chance to take part in it. Besides, I should not have known quite on which side to fight. So I did nothing.

As it was over so quickly, I took a step forward to our latest arrival. "Beg pardon, old man," I began,

paper, like a blank cartridge, placing the cartridge in the chamber of a revolver and repeating the operation until he had it fully loaded. It was his own invention of an asphyxiating bullet.

Perhaps half an hour later the old gentleman, his room cleaned up and his immaculate appearance restored, sauntered forth from the hotel down the street like a veritable Turveydrop, to show himself.

Elaine seemed quite impressed with her new friend, Del Mar, as we made our way to the library, though I am sure that it was a pose on her part. At any rate he seemed quite eager to help us.

"What do you suppose has become of Mr. Kennedy?" asked Elaine.

Del Mar looked at her earnestly. "I should be glad to search for him," he returned quickly. "He was the greatest man in our profession. But first I must execute the commission of the secret service. We must find his torpedo model before it falls into foreign hands."

We talked for a few moments, then Del Mar, with a glance at his watch, excused himself. We accompanied him to the door, for he was indeed a charming man. I felt that in fact he were assigned to the case I ought to know him better.

"You're going downtown," I ventured, "I might accompany you part of the way."

"Delighted," agreed Del Mar. As Del Mar and I walked down the avenue, he kept up a running fire of

conversation until at last we came near the La Coste.

"Charming to have met you, Mr. Jameson," he said, pausing. "We shall see a great deal of each other I hope."

I had not yet had time to say good-bye by myself when a slight exclamation at my side startled me. Turning suddenly, I saw a very brisk, fussy old gentleman who had evidently been hurrying through the crowd. He had slipped on something on the sidewalk and lost his balance, falling near us.

We bent over and assisted him to his feet. As I took hold of his hand, I felt a peculiar pressure from him. He had placed something in my hand. My mind worked quickly. I checked my first impulse to speak, and, more from curiosity than anything else, kept the thing he had passed to me surreptitiously.

"Thank you, gentlemen," he puffed, straightening himself out. "One of the infirmities of age. Thank you, thank you."

In a moment he had bustled off quite comically.

Again Del Mar said good-bye, and I did not urge him to stay. He had scarcely gone when I looked at the thing the old man had placed in my hand. It was a little folded piece of paper. I opened it slowly. Inside was printed in pencil, disguised:

Be Careful. Watch Him.

I read it in amazement. What did it mean?

At the La Coste, Del Mar was met by two of his men in the lobby and they rode up to his room.

Imagine their surprise when they opened the door and found the valet lying bound on the floor.

"Who the deuce did this?" demanded Del Mar as they loosened him.

The valet rose weakly to his feet. "A little old man with gray whiskers," he managed to gasp.

Del Mar looked at him in surprise. Instantly his active mind recalled the little old man who had fallen before us on the street.

"Who—what was he?"

"Come," he said quickly, beckoning his two companions, who had come in with him.

Some time later, Del Mar's car stopped just below the Dodge house.

"You men go around back of the house and watch," ordered Del Mar. As they disappeared he turned and went up the Dodge steps.

I walked back after my strange experience with the fussy little old gentleman, feeling more than ever, now that Craig was gone, that both Elaine and Aunt Josephine needed me.

As we sat talking in the library, Rusty, released from the chain on which Jennings kept him, bounded with a rush into the library.

"Good old fellow," encouraged Elaine, patting him.

Just then Jennings entered, and a moment later was followed by Del Mar, who bowed as we welcomed him.

"Do you know," he began, "I believe that the lost torpedo model is somewhere in this house, and I have reason to anticipate another attempt of foreign agents to find it. If you'll pardon me, I've taken the liberty of surrounding the place with some men we can trust."

While Del Mar was speaking Elaine picked up a ribbon from the table and started to tie it about Rusty's neck. As Del Mar proceeded she paused, still holding the ribbon, Rusty, who hated ribbons, saw his chance and quietly sidled out, seeking refuge in the conservatory.

Alone in the conservatory, Rusty quickly forgot about the ribbon and began nuzzling about the palms. At last he came to the pot in which the torpedo model had been buried in the soft earth by the thief the night it had been stolen from the fountain.

Quickly Elaine recalled herself, and, seeing the ribbon in her hand and Rusty gone, called him. There was no answer, and she excused herself, for it was against the rules for Rusty to wander about.

In his haste the thief had left just a corner of the handkerchief sticking out of the dirt. What none of us had noticed, Rusty's keen eyes and nose discovered, and his instinct told him to dig for it. In a moment he uncovered the torpedo and handkerchief and sniffed.

Just then he heard his mistress calling him. Rusty had been whipped for digging in the conservatory, and now, with his tail between his legs, he seized the torpedo in his mouth and bolted for the door of the drawing room, for he had heard voices in the library. As he did so he dropped the handkerchief and the little propeller, loosened by his teeth, fell off.

Elaine entered the conservatory, still calling. Rusty was not there. He had reached the stairs, scurrying up to the attic, still holding the torpedo model in his mouth. He pushed open the attic door and ran in. Rusty's last refuge in time of trouble was back of a number of trunks, among which were two of almost the same size and appearance. Behind one of them he had hidden a miscellaneous collection of bones, pieces of biscuit and things dear to his heart. He dropped the torpedo among these treasures.

Del Mar, meanwhile, had followed Elaine through the hall and into the conservatory. As he entered he could see her stooping down to look through the palms for Rusty. She straightened up and went on out.

Del Mar followed. Beside the palm pot where Rusty had found the torpedo he happened to see the old handkerchief stifled with dirt. Near by lay the little propeller. He picked them up.

"She has found it!" he exclaimed in wonder, following Elaine.

Outside, on the lawn, Del Mar's man had been looking about, but had discovered nothing. They passed a moment to speak.

"Look out!" whispered one of them. "There's someone coming."

They dropped down in the shadow. There in the light of the street lamp was the fussy old gentleman coming across the lawn. He stole up to the door of the conservatory and looked through. Del Mar's man crawled a few feet closer. The little old man entered the conservatory and looked about again stealthily. The two men followed him in noiselessly and watched as he bent over the palm pot from which the dog had dug up the torpedo. He looked at the hole curiously. Just then he heard sounds behind him and sprang to his feet.

"Hands up," ordered one of the men, covering him with a gun.

The little old man threw up his hands, raising his cane still in his right hand. The man with the gun took a step closer. As he did so the little old man brought down his cane with a quick blow and knocked the gun out of his hand. The second man seized the cane. The old man jerked the cane back and was standing there with a thin, tough steel rapier. It was a sword cane. Del Mar's man held the sheath.

As the man attacked with the sheath the little old man parried, what it flying from his grasp and wounded him. The wounded man sank down, while the little old man ran off through the palms, followed by the other of Del Mar's men.

Around the hall he ran and back into the conservatory, where he picked up a heavy chair and threw it through the glass, dropping himself behind a convenient hiding-place near by. Del Mar's man, close after him, mistaking the crash of glass for the escape of the man he was pursuing, went on through the broken exit. Then the little old man doubled on his tracks and made for the front of the house.

With Aunt Josephine I had remained in the library.

"What's that?" I exclaimed at the first sounds. "A fight?"

Together we rushed for the conservatory.

The fight, followed so quickly by the crash of glass, also alarmed Elaine and Del Mar in the hallway and they hurried toward the library, which we had just left, by another door.

As they entered they saw a little old gentleman rushing in from the conservatory and locking the door behind him. He whirled about, and he and Del Mar recognized each other at once. They drew guns together, but the little old man fired first.

His bullet struck the wall back of Del Mar and a cloud of vapor was instantly formed, enveloping Del Mar and even Elaine. Del Mar fell, overcome, while Elaine sank more slowly. The little old man ran forward.

In the conservatory Aunt Josephine and I heard the shooting, just as one of Del Mar's men ran in again. With him we ran back toward the library.

By this time the whole house was aroused. Jennings and Marie were hurrying downstairs, crying for help and making their way to the library also.

In the library the little old man bent over Del Mar and Elaine. But it was only a moment later that he heard the whole house aroused. Quickly he shut and locked the folding doors to the drawing room as, with Del Mar's man, I was beating at the rear library door.

"I'll go around," I suggested, hurrying off, while Del Mar's man tried to beat in the door.

Inside the little old man, who had been listening, saw that there was no means of escape. He pulled off his coat and vest and turned them inside out. On the inside he had prepared an exact copy of Jennings' livery.

It was only a matter of seconds before he had completed his change. For a moment he paused and looked at the two prostrate figures before him. Then he took a rose from a vase on the table and placed it in Elaine's hand.

Finally, with his whiskers and wig off, he moved to the rear door where Del Mar's man was beating and opened it.

"Look," he cried, pointing in an agitated way at Del Mar and Elaine. "What shall we do?"

Del Mar's man, who had never seen Jennings, ran to his master, and the little old man, in his new disguise, slipped quietly into the hall and out the front door, where he had a taxicab waiting for him down the street.

A moment later I burst open the other library door and Aunt Josephine followed me in, just as Jennings himself and Marie entered from the drawing room.

It was only a moment before we had Del Mar, who was most in need of care, on the sofa, and Elaine, already remaining consciousness, lay back in a deep easy chair.

As Del Mar moved I turned again to Elaine, who was now nearly recovered.

"How do you feel?" I asked, anxiously.

Her throat was parched by the asphyxiating fumes, but she smiled brightly, though weakly.

"Where did I get that?" she managed to gasp finally, catching sight of the rose in her hand. "Did you put it there?"

I shook my head and she gazed at the rose, wondering.

Whoever the little man was, he was gone.

I longed for Craig.

END OF CHAPTER XXV.



Del Mar and the Old Man Draw Guns Together.

"but don't you think this is just a little raw? What's it all about?"

The newest comer eyed me for a moment, then with quiet dignity drew from his pocket and handed me his card, which read simply:

M. DEL MAR, Private Investigator.

I looked up. I saw Del Mar's other policeman bringing in another man.

"These are crooks—foreign agents," replied Del Mar pointing to the prisoners. "The government has employed me to run them down."

"What of this?" asked Elaine, holding up the note from Bertrand.

"A fake, a forgery," reiterated Del Mar, looking at it a moment critically. Then to the men uniformed as police he ordered: "You can take them to jail. They're the fellows, all right."

As the prisoners were led off, Del Mar turned to Elaine. "Would you mind answering a few questions about these men?"

"Why—no," she hesitated. "But I think we'd better go into the house, after such a thing as this. It makes me feel nervous."

With Del Mar I followed Elaine in through the conservatory.

Del Mar had scarcely registered at the La Coste when the smaller car which had been waiting at the fisherman's hut drew up before the hotel entrance. From it alighted the fussy old gentleman who bore such a remarkable resemblance to the fisherman. Hastily paid his driver and entered the hotel.

He went directly to the desk and

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